

Message Text

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16
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00

IO-13 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 /069 W

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R 101013Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6154
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, SN
SUBJ: APPROACH TO GOS REGARDING AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. PER REQUEST REFTEL, ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR AND
EMBOFF APPROACHED MFA OFFICIALS (LEE CHIONG GIAM, DIRECTOR,
REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC DIVISION AND K. KESAVAPANY, ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT) ON SEPTEMBER 10 TO EMPHASIZE
USG CONCERN REGARDING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY AND TO
URGE GOS TO INSURE THAT ITS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS THOROUGH
AS POSSIBLE. EMBOFFS ALSO URGED GOS TO RATIFY 1970 HAGUE AND 1971
MONTREAL CONVENTIONS, WHICH GOS HAD SIGNED ON 8 SEPTEMBER 1971
AND 21 NOVEMBER 1972 RESPECTIVELY. THE OFFICIALS DID NOT OFFER
ANY REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN RATIFICATION BUT SAID THEY WOULD
LOOK INTO THE MATTER (FYI: EMBASSY APPROACHED GOS PREVIOUSLY
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ON RATIFICATION IN OCTOBER 1973 AND APRIL 1974).

2. PRIOR TO OUR APPROACH TO MFA, EMBOFF AND RSO DISCUSSED SAME SUBJECT WITH MICHAEL CHAI, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION OF SINGAPORE POLICE, WHO HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIRPORT SECURITY. BASED ON HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICIALS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES IN RECENT ICAO REGIONAL MEETING AT BANGKOK, CHAI SAID THAT SINGAPORE'S SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS GOOD AS OR BETTER THAN THOSE RECOMMENDED IN ICAO STANDARDS ANNEX 17. WITH RESPECT TO TRANSIT AREAS, CHAI SAID THAT TRANSIT AND DEPARTING PASSENGERS OCCUPY THE SAME LOUNGE. HOWEVER, BOTH GROUPS ARE SUBJECT TO PHYSICAL SEARCH OF HAND BAGGAGE AND MAGNETIC SEARCH OF THEIR PERSON BEFORE ENTRY. DEPARTURE/TRANSIT LOUNGE IS SUBJECT OF POLICE SURVEILLANCE THROUGH CLOSED CIRCUIT T.V. AND IS NOT OPEN TO PUBLIC ACCESS. COMMENT: FROM OUR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS, ONE APPARENT SHORTCOMING IS THE FACT THAT ARMED POLICE ARE STATIONED AT POINT BEFORE REACHING SEARCH AREA AND ARE NOT CO-LOCATED WITH PERSONNEL WHO ACTUALLY CONDUCT SEARCH OF DEPARTING PASSENGERS. THIS WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACKER TO INITIATE ACTION AT SEARCH AREA WITH FREE ACCESS TO DEPARTURE/TRANSIT LOUNGE AND AIRCRAFT. END COMMENT.

3. CHAI ADDED THAT X-RAY EQUIPMENT WILL SOON BE USED FOR HAND BAGGAGE RATHER THAN PHYSICAL SEARCH. SIA IS ALSO PUTTING INTO OPERATION EQUIPMENT FOR X-RAY OF OUTBOUND LUGGAGE TO BE STORED IN CARGO HOLD. THIS EQUIPMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO OTHER AIRLINES ON REQUEST (INCOMING BAGGAGE IS ALREADY BEING CHECKED BY X-RAY MACHINES ON RANDOM BASIS).

4. IN OPINION OF EMBOFF AND RSO, SINGAPORE AIRPORT SECURITY IS GOOD AND SECURITY PERSONNEL APPEAR TO BE WELL TRAINED AND PROFESSIONAL IN EXECUTING THEIR DUTIES. LOCAL PANAM REPRESENTATIVE HAS CONFIRMED THIS JUDGEMENT. HE SAID THAT PRIOR TO HIJACKING OF "LAJU" FERRY IN 1974, THE AIRLINES WERE MORE OR LESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SECURITY. HOWEVER, AFTER THAT INCIDENT THE SINGAPORE POLICE WERE GIVEN FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING SECURITY PROGRAMS AND A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WAVING/OBSERVATION GALLERY AT PAYA LEBAR WAS CLOSED FOR RENOVATION IN 1974 AND IS NOW BEING REOPENED AS A COMPLETELY ENCLOSED AREA WITH BULLETPROOF GLASS.

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PANAM REPRESENTATIVE ADDED THAT MANY OF THE AIRLINES, INCLUDING PANAM, FOLLOW SECURITY PROCEDURES IN ADDITION TO WHAT IS REQUIRED BY THE GOS. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT PANAM'S DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SECURITY, WHO IS STATIONED IN HONG KONG, WOULD HAVE GOOD FEEL FOR RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF VARIOUS AIRPORT SECURITY PROGRAMS AROUND THE REGION. GRANT

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